



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES
October 25, 2010
4:30 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Sterner, F. Acosta, D. Reed, S. Marmarou, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, V. Spencer, J. Waltman

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, C. Younger, C. Geffken, C. Weidel, F. Denbowski, C. Jones, D. Cituk, W. Heim, J. Miravich

Mr. Acosta called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 4:36 p.m.

I. Police Budget

Mr. Geffken stated that personnel costs increased due to collective bargaining agreements. He stated that the Police Academy is self-sustaining.

Mr. Acosta questioned the cost of training per officer. Chief Heim stated that other municipalities and pre-service students pay \$3,500 per person to the Academy.

Mr. Geffken stated that staff has been reallocated in the Department due to fewer officers on the force.

Mr. Geffken stated that salaries have decreased in patrol due to the reduction in officers. He stated that K-9 maintenance expenses needed to be restored as only a portion of the expenses covered by the grant.

Mr. Geffken stated that the Property Maintenance Division is being transferred to the Community Development Department.

Mr. Cituk questioned if the Community Foundation would continue to fund K-9 operations to offset the \$50,000 noted in the budget. Chief Heim stated that the \$50,000 included in the budget is above that received from the Community Foundation.

Mr. Spencer questioned how the funding received from the Community Foundation was used. Chief Heim stated that approximately \$600,000 was received and paid for the purchase and training of five dogs, the training officer's salary, and the protective equipment needed for the dogs.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if the Community Foundation funding was listed as a revenue item and earmarked for these expenses. Mr. Geffken stated that it is contained in the Agency Funds not the General Fund.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if salaries are listed in agency funds when they are covered by grant funding. Mr. Geffken stated that they are not due to the fringe benefits and the pension expenses associated with them.

Dan Robinson arrived at this time.

Mr. Marmarou questioned when the current collective bargaining agreement expires. Chief Heim stated that it expires on December 31, 2011.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if the holiday pay line item should contain an increase. Mr. Geffken stated that it should and that an adjustment would be made.

Mr. Sterner stated that the Police Department budget increased \$1.7 million with 11 fewer officers. He stated that these increases do not paint a bright picture for future budgets.

Mr. Cituk stated that he would review the Police pension amounts after the positions are finalized.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that increases continue. She requested a pie chart for each department noting line item costs to determine what costs are controllable. She noted the need to better control pension and benefit costs.

Mr. Sterner noted the need for the State to take action on municipal pension law.

Ms. Reed noted that Pittsburgh will be asking the State for assistance to cover its pension costs. Mr. Cituk stated that Pittsburgh's pension is only 27% funded where Reading's pension is 80% funded. He noted that all cities in Pennsylvania are facing this pension issue.

Mr. Waltman noted the need for pension to be reviewed overall. He also noted the conflicting opinions regarding increasing the Police Department by ten officers. He requested a

contingency plan for 2011 and its financial impacts. He noted that public safety should be a top concern in the budget process.

Mr. Acosta stated that the reinstatement of ten officers will be revisited. He noted the need to see the Administration's contingency plan.

Mr. Waltman requested that the contingency plan also address the mitigation of attrition.

Mr. Spencer stated that the Fire Department collective bargaining agreement expired and the process will be closely observed by the Police Department. He noted the possible future impacts of these negotiations.

II. Water Authority

Mr. Miravich stated that his information has the potential for future litigation.

Council entered executive session at 5 pm and exited at 5:32 pm.

III. Waste Water Treatment Plant Update

Mr. Miravich stated that his update deals with litigation.

Council entered executive session at 5:33 pm and exited at 5:50 pm.

IV. Community Development Budget

Mr. Robinson stated that the largest issue is the transfer of the Property Maintenance Division. He noted the need to hire a Deputy Director to act as the Housing Coordinator. He distributed the 2009 Community Development Annual Report.

Mr. Acosta noted the need to discuss the Property Maintenance Division transfer.

Mr. Spencer questioned why this division continues to be transferred. He noted his belief that the issues are with supervision. Mr. Geffken stated that the division was originally transferred to Police for better structure and supervision. He noted that there is more work to be done in this area but that Property Maintenance is generally a Community Development division since it is inter-related to zoning and trades. He stated that reinstating it to Community Development would give it better structure and supervision.

Mr. Acosta questioned what would be changing to ensure better management of the division. Mr. Geffken stated that with Mr. Robinson as director and the new housing czar, they can ensure work gets done.

Mr. Acosta questioned if there was a plan for improvement. Mr. Robinson replied affirmatively. Mr. Geffken stated that the plan has not been presented to Council but that the move will synergize the divisions.

Mr. Waltman stated that he requested this information when the Administration originally requested the additional positions. He stated that he has yet to receive this information. Mr. Geffken noted his willingness to provide this information. Mr. Robinson noted that the Deputy Director candidate must have a background in codes and noted his background with codes. He stated that there are very few managers in CD.

Mr. Spencer noted that the breakdown in the chain of supervision must be addressed. He stated that there is a common denominator and this should be addressed before the division is transferred.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned how the Administration planned to measure outcomes. She noted that shortcomings in the Property Maintenance Division are very visible in the neighborhoods and by the community. She stated that Council has passed ordinances which are not enforced.

Ms. Reed noted that this division is pivotal to the City's economic status and the current crime situation. She stated that this division has been allowed to fail for too long and that the status quo is no longer acceptable.

Mr. Waltman stated that Council has done much in the past several years to improve this division with no results. He noted the need to update the division's plan and goals.

Mr. Geffken requested an executive session to discuss personnel issues.

Council entered executive session at 6:06 pm and exited at 6:16 pm.

Mr. Geffken explained that the salary increase in zoning is due to the collective bargaining agreement. He noted that the Zoning Administrator's salary has been frozen but not reduced by the 2.5% required for management employees.

Mr. Spencer requested the actual zoning revenue and expenses for 2010 to date. Mr. Cituk stated that he would supply that information.

Mr. Geffken stated that the decrease in salaries in trades was due to one employee being moved to the Services Center.

Mr. Cituk stated that the UCC Education and Training line item has decreased. He questioned if the \$4 per permit payable to the State was above the fee for the City permit. Mr. Geffken

stated that it was. He also stated that future projects need to be recalculated to the new cost estimates.

Mr. Geffken stated that salaries increased in CD Administration because of the addition of the Deputy Director and a PMI Specialist for the Ricktown project.

V. Agenda Review

Ms. Kelleher explained that the ordinance regarding the EIT for non-Reading residents needs to be moved out of pending for action this evening. In addition, a resolution to authorize the Administration to petition the Court for the EIT for non-Reading residents and a contract award to Northeast Industrial Services for the demolition of 253 Reed St need to be added to the agenda.

Council reviewed this evening's agenda including:

- Ordinance limiting the number of cats and dogs per household

Ms. Kelleher described the work of the Legislative Aide Committee on this issue. She stated that during their review other local municipalities have passed limits. She stated that the ordinance would be complaint based and there would be no permit or fee required.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the timing of this ordinance is bad. She stated that Council has bigger issues to discuss at this time and requested the final passage be delayed until January.

Mr. Spencer stated that the ordinance would be introduced this evening. He stated that a delay is possible.

Mr. Sterner stated that this issue has been reviewed in the past and that this should be a simple decision.

Mr. Geffken questioned who would grant a variance and who would enforce the ordinance. Ms. Kelleher stated that these items would be handled by the City's Animal Control agency.

- Contract Award to Northeast Industrial for demolition of 253 Reed St, the former Cold Storage building

Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that this process was delayed during review by the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission because of the historical significance of the building.

Ms. Reed questioned if artifacts would be salvaged. Mr. Geffken stated that they would and that the items will be donated to the Centre Park Artifacts Bank for resale.

- Ordinance adding a Controller in the Finance Department

Mr. Geffken explained that funding would be provided for this position (75,000 year one, 50,000 year two, and 25,000 year three) and that it is an initiative contained in the Recovery Plan.

- Ordinances amending the Officers and Employees Pension

Mr. Younger explained that these items were brought to him by the solicitor to the Pension Board. He stated that they are necessary due to new federal regulations and to clarify language.

- Ordinance adding three Property Maintenance Aides to the Police Department

Mr. Geffken stated that these positions would implement the quality of life ticketing program. He distributed a report showing the number of tickets and revenue needed to sustain the positions which is approximately one citation per hour per aide.

Mr. Waltman expressed his belief that without goals and a plan, there should be no staff increase. He stated that Codes is comprehensive and that ticketing residents would make little progress.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if the Aides would be in uniform. Mr. Geffken stated that they would.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for the Administration to have a plan to begin utilizing the quality of life ticketing program.

Mr. Acosta questioned if this program would bring added revenue.

Mr. Spencer questioned who would be supervising the Aides. Mr. Geffken stated that it would be a PMI supervisor.

- Ordinance adding a Program Manager in Community Development

Mr. Robinson explained that this position would be 100% funded through CD Administration. Mr. Geffken stated that the position would ensure that HUD requirements are being met.

Mr. Spencer noted the need for Council to understand the layers of management in CD.

- Ordinance enforcing parking at meters on Saturday and extending enforcement hours to 8 pm

Mr. Spencer noted his need to have a clearer understanding of the overall budget before taking action on these items.

Mr. Sterner questioned how much additional revenue this would generate. Mr. Spencer stated that it is unknown at this time.

Ms. Reed stated that Washington DC enforces meters on Saturday until 10 pm. She stated that visitors and residents continue to use meters. She noted her concern with the statement made by Mr. Lee that 20% of parking permits are issued to Sovereign Bank.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the current meters are not user friendly. She suggested that the ordinances be tabled.

Mr. Acosta noted his belief that this additional enforcement would hurt downtown businesses.

Ms. Reed stated her belief that Saturday enforcement could increase downtown traffic as cars would need to move more frequently. She noted her concern with increasing the time to 8 pm as it would affect evening events and may influence attendance at large events such as concerts and hockey games.

Mr. Waltman noted the need for Council to analyze this issue to be sure it will not harm the City in the long-term.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC
City Clerk